ORD's Office of Science Policy

Factsheet

Putting Science Innovation to Work

Federal Technology Transfer Act Program

In 1986, Congress enacted the Federal Technology Transfer Act (FTTA), allowing private industry and state/local governments access to federal laboratories. The goal of this effort is to more efficiently and more effectively put federally funded technology to use in real-world applications. EPA's FTTA program is implemented through its Office of Research and Development.

The primary vehicle used by the EPA's FTTA program is a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) to exchange EPA personnel, equipment or services for a particular project. It is flexible and can be adapted to fit the goals of a variety of organizations. A CRADA allows private-sector companies to take advantage of the FTTA program in an easy, efficient manner.

Who Participates?

Private businesses of all sizes are learning firsthand the benefits of tapping into EPA's resources to conduct joint research and technology commercialization. The majority of those businesses are considered small or medium-sized, allowing them to make a significant and positive impact on the environment. A number of large corporations, ranging from Exxon to Procter and Gamble, have also taken advantage of the program.

Other participants may include:
- Consortia
- Trade associations
- Academia
- State & local governments

Participation Benefits

The FTTA program is a win-win for all involved parties. Private industry can utilize EPA's high-quality research to provide tangible solutions. Most Important, everyone benefits from a cleaner, healthier environment.

In addition, participating organizations receive:
- Access to EPA's state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and equipment
- Collaboration with the nation's top environmental scientists and engineers
- Opportunities for exclusive licensing of patented technologies
- Technical orientation toward pollution prevention and source reduction

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www.epa.gov/osp

At Work with EPA's FTTA

Many organizations have taken advantage of EPA's FTTA program, bringing innovative environmental solutions to the general public. Following are just two examples of how this program is working:

Black Mold Detection – EPA researchers developed a DNA-based, patented process that measures more than 130 species of toxic molds and fungi, including Stachybotrys chartarum, or black mold as it is commonly known, in indoor environments. This unique process is simple, inexpensive, sensitive and accurate. With EPA's new technology, as little as one mold spore can be quickly and accurately identified, allowing focused remediation efforts to begin quickly. Now licensed to six companies in the United States and Europe, this EPA technology provides results in hours compared with existing microscopic technologies that can take up to two weeks. In the past, health-threatening molds have been difficult to distinguish from one another, causing time-consuming and costly problems for schools, homes and businesses.

Pollution-Prevention Software – Solvents are an integral part of today's technology, but unfortunately are also a growing source of pollution. While reducing solvent use and recycling can help, these measures can't eliminate the pollution. An alternative approach is to design more environmentally friendly solvents. That is why the EPA developed PARIS II. This is the only software that designs solvents and mixtures of solvents using technological and environmental performance measures. For example, PARIS II took a typical solvent, methyl ethyl ketone, and recommended an alternative solution of 2-pentanone and acetone. The alternative solvent provided similar technical results, but pollutes much less: 2-pentanone and acetone's potential environmental impact on human health and the environment is only one-quarter of methyl ethyl ketone's. Currently, through a CRADA with Technical Database Services, Inc., PARIS II is licensed to major companies and consulting firms in the pharmaceutical, chemical and aeronautical industries.

For more information on the Federal Technology Transfer Act, visit the OSP Web Site.

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